

# PUBLIC HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP

## HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE

December 2, 2013

On October 1, 2013, the Department of Health became the first Washington State agency to successfully connect to the Health Information Exchange (HIE). This connection is the successful outcome of a multi-year project involving the Division of Information Resource Management and all the agency divisions.

The Health Information Exchange is an electronic means to connect healthcare organizations for information sharing. By connecting to the HIE, the Department of Health is able to send/receive health information in an electronic form to/from hospitals, clinics and individual providers that are also connected to the HIE. This connection will also support federal Meaningful Use in which hospitals and providers can receive financial incentive for having electronic medical records systems and using the HIE to share data.

The first data type to be received at the Department of Health through the HIE will be lab reports of reportable illnesses (in submission testing now). Other types of reporting that will follow include Syndromic Surveillance and immunizations data.

### WORK IN PROGRESS

- Prescription Monitoring Program will start using the Health Information Exchange to allow health providers to request and receive prescription history information on their patients
  - The death rate from prescription pain medication overdose is six-fold from what it was in 1998 (49 deaths or 0.8 per 100,000). In 2011, 407 people died and the rate was 5.7 per 100,000. Deaths from unintentional drug overdoses surpass deaths from automobile crashes in Washington State.
- The Cancer Registry will start using the HIE to accept cancer case and private lab reports
  - As cancer treatment becomes more and more an outpatient process an ever growing number of providers and laboratories will be required to report this cancer case information to the state cancer registry (WSCR). Electronic reporting is seen as a way to make reporting, processing and sharing of this information more efficient.
- Lab results from the Department of Health's Newborn Screening Program will be distributed to hospitals and clinics by the HIE
  - Currently normal newborn results are sent out via standard US mail, transitioning this to an electronic process will speed up the turnaround time to get results to the providers.